THE PARISH MESSENGER

News of the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America

VOL. 8 WINNIPEG, MANITOBA — AUTUMN, 1952 No. 3

SYNOD ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

REV. V. J. EYLANDS
New President

REV. G. GUTTORMSSON
New Vice-President

SESSIONS MARKED BY SPIRIT OF PROGRESS

Everyone who attended the 68th Annual Convention of our Synod in Minneota this last summer sensed a real spirit of progress and action in the business sessions. The reports presented by the officers and standing committees revealed progress and effective activity in the Synod's work. These reports showed that our congregations, who make up our Synod, were for the most part, busily and effectively engaged in doing our Lord's work for the past year. Perhaps the outstanding attitude that prevailed during the sessions was the attitude of awakened interest on the part of Synod and its people in Christian Stewardship. Again and again this important concept of our Church's work was stressed. Stewardship was defined at the convention as being "our response to God's love by our giving of our time, talents and money for His work." Treasurer's report showed that many congregations had begun to catch the true spirit of giving to the Church's causes beyond their own local work.

Highlight of the convention was the ordination of the Rev. Stefan Guttormsson, son of host Pastor and Mrs. G. Guttormsson. In the church where he was both baptized and

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Printed Quarterly in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Rev. ERIC H. SIGMAR, Editor.
6522-20th Ave. N.W., Seattle 7, Wash.

confirmed, he was ordained at the opening session on Sunday morning, June 29th. Ordinator was President Fafnis; preacher was Dr. K. K. Olafson; presenter, Rev. H. S. Sigmar; sponsor, Prof. A. C. M. Ahlen. All sessions of the convention were held in St. Paul's Church, Minneota, with the exception of the closing day, when sessions were moved to the Lincoln Church of the parish. The ladies of the parish served excellent meals and refreshments during the four days of the meetings. The weather was hot and humid, but delegates earnestly participated in the business sessions, many in shirt sleeves. There was a spirit of accomplishment and even festivity throughout the entire convention. Convention Chaplain was Rev. Eric H. Sigmar of Seattle, who gave six meditations on the theme, "The Bible in Daily Living". The convention choir was made up of parishioners from the three churches of the parish. Organist was Miss Jennie Frost of St. Paul's Church. Official representative from the U.L.C.A. was Dr. Paul Bishop, president of the Northwest Synod, who in an address on Sunday afternoon, entitled "Storm-Tossed Church", outlined the varied and important work of our United Lutheran Church. He urged our Synod to meets its responsibilities as a member Synod of the U.L.C.A.

EVENING PROGRAMS FILL CHURCH

The three evening sessions, which were open to the public, drew large crowds, and the church's seating capacity was heavily taxed. Sunday evening was the Service of Holy Communion. Dr. H. Sigmar of Blaine preached the sermon, entitled, "This is My Life . . ." Host Pastor Guttormsson and the new Pastor Stefan, his son, served at the altar. The Monday evening program brought two excellent addresses by Synod's pastors Eylands and S. Guttormsson, the former speaking on "Evangelism", and the latter on "Stewardship". Former president of Synod, Pastor K. K. Olafson, now of the Illinois Synod, U.L.C.A., addressed the convention briefly at the invitation of President E. H. Fafnis.

At Tuesday evening's program the delegates and guests were thrilled by an address delivered by a visitor to the convention, Mr. Thorir Thordarson, Cand. Theol., from Iceland, now studying at the University of Chicago. His address, "Archeology and the Bible", was masterfully and interestingly presented in perfect English. The evening also brought five vocal soloists to the "platform": Miss Ingibjorg Bjarnason, Winnipeg; Mrs. Svava Sigmar, Seattle; and Pastors Fafnis, S. Guttormsson and E. Sigmar.

BUSINESS SESSIONS

It is not the intent of this report to give a detailed account of each business session; rather an attempt will be made to outline briefly the reports, discussions and resolutions of the synodical business sessions.

President's Report

President E. H. Fafnis of Mountain, N.D., presented his final presidential report, after having served the Synod for five years as president. He began his report by saying that our Synod was organized 68 years ago to "serve God, and not ourselves", and that we must "quit ourselves as men worthy of the calling we serve". His report was divided into 13 sub-sections: Missions and Benevolences, Lutheran World Action, Our Publications, Stewardship, Evangelism, Christian Education, Old People's Homes,

Pensions, Lutheran Women's League of Synod, Lutheran Brotherhoods and Men's Clubs, Ministerial Supply, Temperance and In Memoriam. He called for greater attention to all these important aspects of our work. He pointed out that "our mission effort, both Home and Foreign, is a co-operative effort with other synods belonging to the United Lutheran Church." He further pointed out that "the uncomfortable fact about our giving to Missions and Benevolences is that only about 60% of our congregations of Synod make any effort to give to these causes. Greater giving must be our conscientious goal during the coming years," he continued. In his remarks about "pensions", he noted that only two pastors of Synod benefit by the "Contributory Pension Plan", a plan whereby congregation and pastor each pay 4% of the pastor's salary per month to build up a retirement fund for the pastors. He praised the work of the Lutheran Women's League, with their great attention to Christian education and Youth Work through the medium of their splendid Sunrise Lutheran Camp. In closing he called to mind the death of Mr. J. J. Swanson, who had served for years as treasurer of "Betel", Old People's Home in Gimli.

Secretary's Report

The secretary, Pastor H. S. Sigmar of Gimli, reported 37 congregations now in the Synod, and 13 pastors on the Ministerial roll. Baptized and confirmed membership had decreased respectively to 6,953 and 4,634. Decrease due largely to the loss of Melankton Congregation in Upham, N.D., which transferred its membership to the Lutheran Free Synod. Communing membership had however increased almost 200. Sunday Schools had decreased from 26 to 24, but enrollment had increased 147, to a total of 1,519. There are now 36 women's organizations with 1,137 members; and seven Young People's groups with 241 members.

Treasurer's Report

Our treasurer, Mr. N. O. Bardal, reported total receipts for the synodical financial year (June 1st to June 1st) to be $8,746.89. Of the amounts received, $1,522.01 was for synodical dues (for synodical administrative costs); $2,888.46 was received for U.L.C.A. Apportionment (Missions); and $1,159.48 for Lutheran World Action.

Missions' Committee Report

Secretary of the Home Mission's Committee, Rev. V. J. Eylands, reported that our Home Missions work is a co-operative effort with the United Lutheran Church. Our Synod has three of its congregations receiving financial support from the Board of American Missions of the U.L.C.A.: Blaine Church, Blaine, Wash.; Vancouver Icelandic Luth. Church, Vancouver, B.C.; and United Luth. Congregation, Cavalier, N.D. He also pointed out that Cavalry Church, Seattle, and Gimli Church, Gimli, Man., have property loans from the Division of Church Extension of the U.L.C.A. The Missions Committee has also attempted to arrange for supply work in the "vacant parishes" of our Synod. Many of these have been for years self-supporting congregations, and are now without pastoral service.

Other Reports

The report of the Lutheran Women's League was presented by Mrs. Helga Guttormsson of Winnipeg. She reported a successful year of activity; particularly encouraging was the development and strides of the Sunrise Lutheran Camp, which now has thirteen substantial buildings, and improved facilities generally. The L.W.L. became officially incorporated during the past year. Mrs. H. S. Erlendson of Arborg, Manitoba, became the new president, succeeding Mrs .A. H. Gray of Winnipeg.

Mrs. A. S. Bardal presented a report from the Manitoba Temperance Alliance. She stated that the

Alliance had been instrumental in securing additional Alcohol Education in public schools of Manitoba.

Rev. S. Olafsson presented the annual report of Betel Old Folks' Home. He reported very satisfactory conditions prevailed at this fine church home, with 58 residents, 16 of whom were admitted during the year. Receipts for the year were $41,077.61, while disbursements were $32,550.32.

Chairman of the Synodical Committee for Parish Education, Stefan Guttormsson, presented their annual report in which he outlined the many resources provided by the Parish Education Committee of the U.L.C.A. for improving our Christian education in our local congregations: posters and tracts, filmstrips, motion pictures, etc.

Rev. Eylands, editor of our Icelandic language publication, "Sameiningin", reported that he had edited the journal quarterly during the past year. The subscription list is still very small, and the paper just manages to sustain itself.

Pastor Eric Sigmar reported for the "Parish Messenger", stating it had come out quarterly, with the co-operation from pastors and some lay people in receiving parish news. He urged the necessity of pastors and church councils in seeing that the paper was properly circulated to all members of their respective congregations.

The Stewardship secretary, Eric Sigmar, reported that "there is a growing vision of our people in understanding and responding to the "wide work of our Church". He further clarified that every Synod is "apportioned" a certain sum to be raised and sent to the Missions and Benevolent program of the U.L.C.A. Our Synod's "apportionment" or "fair share", according to confirmed membership, is somewhat over $9,000.00 per year. Our Synod in turn determines how much each congregation shall give of this "apportionment" which goes for our total Missions program. In past years we have been raising only about 20 to 25% of our "fair share", as a Synod. However, the past year we gave 33% and this year the treasurer reports we will go over 40% if receipts continue to come in as they have so far. The primary reason for this low percentage of giving is that some of our congregations have been giving absolutely nothing for Missions! Thus they drag our percentage down, and make it look bad for our congregations that are doing their share. Our aim and challenge must be this year, that each and every congregation of Synod give something towards their share of our Missions "apportionment". It is the Lord's work; we have been entrusted to do it; we must be better stewards.

Rev. Fafnis reported for the Old People's Home, "Borg", in Mountain, stating that there are 39 residents in the home. Total receipts for the year, $21,292.87; expenditures, $18,272.60.

The C.H.E.Y. (Christian Higher Education Year Appeal) report was given by Rev. Fafnis, wherein he stated that although the year for the ingathering of funds for our colleges and seminaries was now over, we still had a moral obligation towards the appeal as many of our congregations had given nothing towards this cause, whereas others had given very generously.

CONVENTION COMMITTEE REPORTS AND AGENDA DISCUSSION

Convention committees were appointed to study the annual reports submitted, and to report back with their findings and suggestions. Discussion was then opened on all reports. Here following is a brief outline of actions taken on the agenda issues: in a word, the following actions are what the Synod, through its 1952 convention, requires of its congregations. Some actions are merely suggestions, other were specific requests which the individual

congregations are morally obligated to fulfill.

Parish Education

Six recommendations came from the report and discussion of this item: each S.S. sup't. study the report of the Synod's Parish Ed. Committee (secure "Synodical Proceedings 1952" from Synod treasurer); that Evangelism and Stewardship be brought to the level of children and taught in our S.S., that home worship be emphasized anew in our congregations; that more extensive use of the Vacation Bible School be adopted; that audio-visual aids be used in Sunday Schools and V.B.S.; that the Parish Ed. committee be reduced to a one-man committee.

Synodical Homes for the Aged

This report expressed thanks to all staff members and directors of our two synod homes in Mountain, N.D., and Gimli, Man.; special thanks was expressed to Mrs. B. J. Brandson, retiring chairman of the Betel Board of Directors; action was taken to secure two additional nurses for Betel; the convention recommended to the Board of Directors of Betel that consideration be given to building an infirmary adjacent to the "Home" for segregation of actual hospital cases.

Pastors' Salaries

Congregations were asked to be aware of the need for raising pastors' salaries to a comparable level of increased cost of living; the Executive Committee was asked to study further the matter of pensions, with power to act.

Home Missions

Continued salary aid will be required for our Mission Fields at Blaine, Wash., Vancouver, B.C., and Cavalier, N.D.; the convention committee urged that another attempt be made to enter the Saskatchewan field with the hopes or re-organizing the work in Foam Lake, Leslie, Mozart and Kandahar. The convention committee further urged that Synodical Home Missions Committee help in securing pastoral service for the three vacant parishes: Langruth, Lundar and Arborg-Riverton. Further they directed attention to the following preaching points, and the need for supply work there: Vogar-Silver Bay, Piney, Markerville, Winnipegosis. Finally the committee suggested that the Synodical Committee endeavor to secure new pastors from our seminaries, and by contacting men formerly serving in our Synod.

Publications

It was adopted that both "Sameiningin" and "The Parish Messenger" be continued as official news organs of the Synod, both to come out quarterly as last year. The price of "Sameiningin" will be $1 per year, "The Parish Messenger" will be sent FREE to all congregations of Synod this year, and distribution will be in the hands of the local pastors or church councils. "The Year Book" is to be printed again this year with five to ten copies for each congregation, and the suggestion was made that each church officer secure one. Finally the committee strongly urged that each congregation attempt to get "The Lutheran", official U.L.C.A. weekly magazine into as many homes as possible.

Financial Committee Report

Through the suggestions of the Financial Committee the Synod adopted a budget of $10,000.00 for 1952-1953, sub-divided as follows: $5,000.00 for Missions (U.L.C.A.); Synodical operating expense, $2,500; Lutheran World Action, $1,500.00; Pastors' Memorial Fund, $500.; Sunrise Lutheran Camp, $500.00. This represents the **minimum** budget. The committee recognizes that our U.L.C.A. apportionment for Missions is over $9,000.00, and $5,000 is merely a suggestion for the bare minimum remitted to U.L.C.A. for our fair share to missions.. It represents a step forward, for our missions giving up to now has never exceeded $3,000.

Stewardship Report

Committee made the following recommendations: 1. That synodical pastors sincerely realize that the burden of the message of Stewardship lies on their shoulders. 2. Creation of a local "Stewardship Committee" in each congregation. 3. Use of Stewardship material available free from the Stewardship office at 231 Madison Ave., New York City. 4. Translation of some Stewardship literature in Icelandic language for sake of older members. 5. Each congregation arrange for a visit by the Stewardship secretary.

Lutheran Women's League

The convention committee of the L.W.L. expressed the gratitude of the Synod to the League for its various successful projects, in particular its continued good work thru the medium of the League's Sunrise Lutheran Camp. The committee further suggested that pastors aid the L.W.L. in organizing Sunday Schools in outlying districts; that each congregation give moral and material help to the Camp; that delegates urge parents to send their children to the Camp.

New Officers

When all committee reports had come in, and discussion followed, and actions taken, the convention turned its attention to election of new officers and committees. Results are here following:

President, Rev. V. J. Eylands, Winnipeg; vice-president, Rev. G. Guttormsson, Minneota; secretary, Rev. H. S. Sigmar, Gimli; treasurer, Mr. N. O. Bardal; Stewardship secretary, Rev. Stefan Guttormsson, Cavalier; honorary president, Dr. R. Marteinsson; honorary patron, Bishop Sigurgeir Sigurdson; honorary life members, Dr. and Mrs. Marteinsson; assistant secretary, Rev. S. Guttormsson; assistant treasurer, S. Stefansson, Hensel N.D. Executive committee: Pastors Eylands, H. S. Sigmar, Olafsson and Fafnis; Laymen N. O. Bardal, S. Stefansson and Victor Jonasson, Winnipeg. Home Missions Committee: Pastors Eylands, Olafsson, E. H. Sigmar, Mr. Joe Peterson, Mrs. B. Bjarnason.

Director of Religious Education, Rev. S. Guttormsson. Editor "Sameiningin", Rev. Eylands. Editor "Parish Messenger", E. H. Sigmar. Auditors: Mr. F. Thordarson for the Synod, and Mr. O. B. Olson, "Betel".

Closing

Following the election of officers, President Fafnis installed the newly-elected president, V. J. Eylands, into his new office. Mr. Eylands then addressed the assembly and asked for greater efforts from all congregations of Synod in extending God's Kingdom, by feeling more responsible in carrying out all of the Causes of Christ's Church.

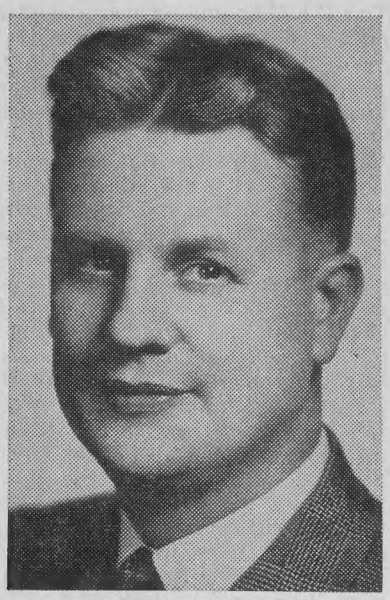
In its closing moments the convention accepted an invitation by delegate Mrs. E. H. Sigmar of Seattle, to hold the 69th Annual Convention of Synod in Calvary Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington.

Brynjolfsson Installed In Vancouver Church

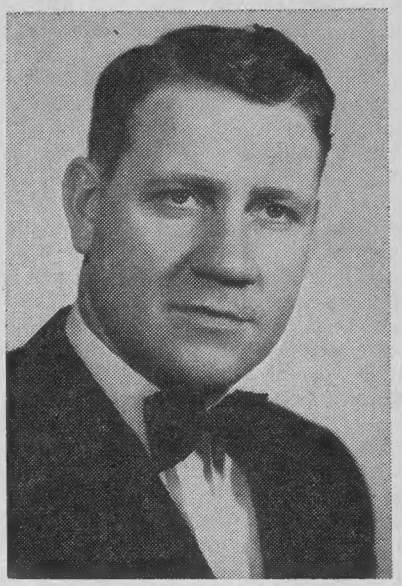
At a festive service in Vancouver, B.C., Sunday, October 5th, the Rev. Eirikur Brynjolfsson was installed pastor of the Icelandic Lutheran Church of Vancouver. The Rev. Valdimar J. Eylands of Winnipeg president of our Synod, conducted the service and installed the new pastor. He also delivered a charge to the congregation and its pastor. Dr. R. Marteinsson and Dr. H. Sigmar, both former pastors of the Vancouver congregation, delivered short sermons or "charges" to the congregation.

Following the service, which was attended by over 250 people, a reception was held in the church parlors. Best wishes for a blessed ministry are extended to the congregation and its new pastor.

Eighteenth Convention of U.L.C.A. in Seattle



DR. EDW. PALMASON



MR. TANI BJORNSON

Two of Our Synod Laymen Take Prominent Part in U.L.C.A. Convention

For the first time since its inception in 1918, the United Lutheran Church in America met on the West Coast. The meetings were held in Seattle, Wash., from October 8th to 15th, in the city's spacious Olympic Hotel. From all parts of the U.S. and Canada the delegates and guests came. Delegates and fraternal visitors were also present from our Foreign Mission Fields.

From our Icelandic Synod there were four official delegates: President V. J. Eylands, Winnipeg; Pastor S. O. Thorlaksson of Berkeley, Cal.; Mr. Skuli Stefanson, Hensel, N.D.; Mr. Bill Palsson, Geysir, Manitoba. A total of over 624 delegates registered, with another three or four hundred visitors. Other pastors of our Synod who visited the convention were: Drs. R. Marteinsson, Winnipeg, H. Sigmar, Blaine; Pastors H. S. Sigmar, Gimli, E. H. Sigmar and G. P. Johnson, Seattle.

Two laymen of our Synod played an important part in the program schedule of the convention. Mr. Tani Bjornson, baritone, choir director of our Calvary Lutheran Church, Seattle, sang a solo at the Memorial Service, Friday morning, October 10th. He also sang solo parts in choir anthems at the opening Holy Communion Service, and at the Sunday afternoon program of the Parish Education Board. Dr. Edward Palmason, Calvary member, tenor, was the guest soloist at the Lutheran Laymen's Banquet on Thursday evening, October 9, which was attended by over 1,300 people. Pastor Eric Sigmar was a member of the official Convention Planning

Committee. Other choir members of Calvary Church sang in the two convention choirs. Both of these soloists were highly acclaimed by the convention. Mrs. Nancy Schewing, of Calvary, took leading roles in the Parish Education Board's dramatic production, "O Word of God".

The conventioned opened with its service of Holy Communion in the beautiful and Lutheran-like University Methodist Temple. Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, president of the U.L.C.A., preached the sermon. Business sessions began the following morning and concluded at 1 p.m. the 15th. Other special events were: 1. The before-mentioned Lutheran Laymen's Banquet held in the Civic Auditorium, with Mr. Everett Mitchell of Chicago's "National Farm and Home Hour", as main speaker. At the banquet over 25 new laymen joined the Lutheran Laymen's movement, bringing the total to 1,350 members. (Mr. N. O. Bardal, Winnipeg, is the only layman of our Synod yet a member, but there are indications we will have others from our Synod before long.) (The Lutheran Laymen's movement now underwrites the entire cost of Stewardship promotion in the U.L.C.A.) 2. Memorial Service, Friday morning. 3. Dramatic presentation, "O Word of God", Sunday afternoon. 4. Youth Night, sponsored by the Luther League of America on Sunday night, with Senator Don Eastvold as speaker, Pacific Lutheran College Choir singing, and a Youth Panel discussion.

Important Actions

The U.L.C.A. welcomed and officially received into membership a new Synod, its 34th, The Caribbean Synod, composed of 19 congregations in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands (off the south-east coast of the U.S.A.). The convention approved the Board of Foreign Missions' request to begin mission work in Malaya, an Asiatic field where 99.8% of the population is non-Christian. This brings our foreign mission fields to eight in number. The U.L.C.A. budget was raised for both 1953 and 1954, primarily to meet the increasing needs of the Board of American Missions (Home Missions). This Board is entering almost 50 new fields a year in the U.S. and Canada. But every year the Board has to turn down requests to help begin new mission congregations because of lack of funds and man-power. (Here is where local **stewardship** comes in! If all of **us** in the U.L.C.A. were giving more for God's work, we would be seeing 75 to 100 new congregations started each year by us, through our U.L.C.A.) Convention voted it would like to have the new Revised Standard translation of the Bible for the Epistles and Gospels of the church year in the new service (hymn) book to be published in 1955 . . .; a "Committee on Worship" was created; pensions were raised to $900.00 per year for retired pastors, and to $450 for pastors' widows; the new Theological Seminary in Berkeley, Calif., was officially received. These were some of the most important actions taken at the Seattle convention.

The key oficers were re-elected: president, Dr. Fry; secretary, Dr. F. Eppling Reinartz; editor of "The Lutheran", Dr. Elson Ruff. Dr. Edmund Wagner was elected the new treasurer.

Final decision was to hold its next convention, October 1954, in Toronto, Canada, the first time a U.L.C.A. convention goes to Canada.

PARISH NOTES . . .

St. Paul's Lutheran church, Minneota, has been doing considerable repairs and renovations to their church edifice and parsonage. Over $700 has been spent for this project.

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The president of the congregation of Calvary Lutheran Church, Seattle, has been appointed as full Consul for Iceland in the State of Washington by the Icelandic government.